

Message Text

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60

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1508

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 11328

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJ: EXPLOSION AT POLITBURO SCHOOL OF IDEOLOGY /HEADQUARTERS

CONFIRMED

REF: ADDIS 11286

1. FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHS IN BOTH ETHIOPIAN DAILY PAPERS CONFIRM EXPLOSION AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE AT POLITBURO IDEOLOGY SCHOOL/HEADQUARTERS (REFTEL), WITH GOVERNMENT LAYING BLAME ON ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (EPRP). ARTICLE S STATE ONE ASSISTANT TEACHER KILLED, FOUR CADRES INJURED, AND 4,000 BOOKS ON SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY DESTROYED. EMBASSY SOURCE HAS STATED ASSISTANT TEACHER KILLED WAS WONDWOSSEN HAILU, ALLEGED POLITBURO MEMBER EDUCATED IN U.S., BUT WE STILL WITHHOLDING JUDGMENT. IDENTITIES OF OTHERS PRESENTLY UNKNOWN.

2. SECURITY WITHIN ADDIS INCREASED PAST TWO DAYS WITH ARMORED CARS JOINING MACHINE GUN JEEPS ON CERTAIN STREETS. REPORTS OF SCATTERED GUNFIRE (MOSTLY AFTER DARK) ARE FREQUENT (GUNNERS, HOWEVER, USUALLY UNIDENTIFIED). RUMORS OF DEATH LIST INCLUDING PMAC AND POLITBURO MEMBERS AND SOME BUREAUCRATS CURRENTLY CIRCULATING. TWO WEEKS AGO, GEBRE-EGZIABHER HAGOS, HIGH-LEVEL STAFF CADRE OF POLITBURO, ASSASSINATED, AND THREE
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OTHER ALLEGED POLITBURO CADRES ALSO KILLED (GEBRE-EGZIABHER

GIVEN PROMINENT OBITUARY IN AMHARIC PRESS AND CITED AS
EXEMPLARY REVOLUTINARY, ALTHOUGH HE REPORTEDLY UNPOPULAR
WITH PEOPLE HE TRIED TO ORGANIZE AND INDOCTRINATE.)

3. COMMENT: SERIES OF ATTACKS AGAINST POLITBURO MEMBERS LEND
DREDENCE TO "DEATH LIST/ RUMOR. EMBASSY REMAISN SKEPTICAL,
HOWEVER, TO GOVERNMENT CLAIM THAT EPRP RESPONSIBLE FOR
TOTALITY OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIONS. POST PERSONAL CONNCECTIONS
BETWEEN POLITBURO AND EPRP MEMBERS, IDEOLOGICAL
SIMILARITES BETWEEN TWO GROUPS, AND EPRP DENAIL OF RES-
PONSIBILITY FOR DEATH OF EDRE MERID (LONDON 1678#)
MAY INDICATE EFFORT BY MORE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSTION FACTIONS
TO BREAK STRENGTH OF POLITBURO.
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